

MINUTES FROM THE HUNTSVILLE CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 1ST DAY OF DECEMBER, 2009, IN THE CITY HALL, LOCATED AT 1212 AVENUE M IN THE CITY OF HUNTSVILLE, COUNTY OF WALKER, TEXAS AT 6PM.

The Council met in a regular session with the following:

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: J. Turner, Tom Cole, Mac Woodward, Jack Wagamon, Wayne Barrett, Dalene Zender, Melissa Mahaffey, Charles Forbus, Lanny Ray

COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT: None

OFFICERS PRESENT: Bill Baine, City Manager; Leonard Schneider, City Attorney, Lee Woodward, City Secretary

REGULAR SESSION* [6:00PM] (Councilmember Cole arrived between the Invocation and the Presentation.)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Turner called the meeting to order at 6pm.

2. PLEDGES OF ALLEGIANCE

3. INVOCATION

Councilmember Barrett gave the invocation.

4. PRESENTATION

a. Presentation of letters of appreciation for assistance on Highway 19 project. [J. Turner, Mayor]

The Mayor thanked the Huntsville Police Department, Walter Boyd, Maria McIver, and State Senator Gallegos for their assistance in the progress for Highway 19.

City Manager Bill Baine presented the Mayor with a Certificate of Appreciation from the National Guard 72nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team for the donations from the citizens of Huntsville for the Home for the Holidays campaign held by the City of Huntsville.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

(Approval of Consent Agenda authorizes the City Manager to implement each item in accordance with staff recommendations. An item may be removed from the Consent Agenda and added to the Statutory Agenda for full discussion by request of a member of Council.)

- a. Approve the minutes of the City Council meeting held on November 12, 2009. [Lee Woodward, City Secretary]**
- b. Approve Ordinance 2010-10 amending the budget for FY09-10. [Winston Duke, Finance Director]**
- c. Approve Ordinance 2010-11 amending the budget for FY08-09. [Winston Duke, Finance Director]**
- d. Authorize the City Manager to submit a Letter of Intent to Apply for the STEP grant through ORCA, apply for if invited, and accept if awarded. (Sherry McKibben, Community Development Specialist)**

Councilmember Forbus made a motion to accept the consent agenda. Councilmember Mahaffey seconded the motion.

Councilmember Mahaffey noted an unfinished sentence on page 1 of the November 12, 2009 minutes. Councilmember Wagamon asked that his comments in the last sentence on page 7, item (b) be extended. Councilmember Cole asked that the word "obtrusive" on page 8 be changed to "intrusive."

The motion passed unanimously.

7. MAYOR/CITY COUNCIL AND CITY MANAGER REPORT

- a. Discussion of citizen advisory board for Veterans' Affairs. [J. Turner, Mayor]**

The Mayor explained that he would like to look into bringing some type of veterans' facility to Huntsville, and anticipated presenting a list of nominees for a Veterans Affairs Advisory Board at the next Council meeting.

Councilmember Mahaffey suggested finding out who was in charge of Veterans Affairs at Sam Houston State University.

b. Discussion of United Way funding. [Councilmember Wagamon]

Councilmember Wagamon said he had been contacted by United Way, and that they had had a difficult year. He said he planned to talk with them more about their specific needs and would possibly be asking Council for some help for them.

Councilmember Woodward said that the City had been one of the largest annual contributors to United Way in the past. City Manager Bill Baine said he believed that was no longer the case.

c. Discussion and possible action directing staff to perform RFQ on engineering and construction of Smith Hill Road improvements, specifically to install curb, storm sewer and sidewalk on one side. [Councilmember Wagamon]

Councilmember Wagamon said he had spoken with Aron Kulhavy, City Planner, about a revised plan for Smith Hill Road. Councilmember Wagamon said his goal was to improve runoff and enable citizens an option to walking on the street.

The City Planner said the City solicited RFQs for engineering services several months ago, and suggested getting a proposal from one of those already interviewed and approved companies in order to save money. Councilmember Mahaffey asked how much that would cost. Mr. Kulhavy said an RFP would be at no cost to the City, that the cost would come when a proposal was accepted and a contract was entered into.

Councilmember Ray asked if the City could request a proposal in which the project was priced in smaller pieces, and that perhaps the work could be requested in numbers of linear feet. Mr. Kulhavy said that was possible.

The Mayor asked Councilmember Wagamon if he had a tentative budget for scope of the project. Councilmember Wagamon said possibly as much as \$500,000-700,000 in view of other anticipated project budgets. Mr. Kulhavy agreed that having this general figure would be helpful in terms of addressing the most pressing issues. He further said that a very rough guideline would be that engineering costs would be about ten percent.

Councilmember Barrett asked if there were a map showing which streets have curbs, storm sewers and sidewalks and which did not. Mr. Kulhavy said they had the majority of the information, although not necessarily all together, but that it could be compiled.

Councilmember Forbus recalled the list of other street projects needing attention as well, and asked if the staff could develop a good method of prioritization, including traffic count and other considerations.

The City Manager mentioned several priority road projects, and said he had been told when hired that there were about 143 miles of City roads, and possibly 90 miles or more were not curbed and guttered. He further said his objective was to pursue projects for the greater good of Huntsville.

Councilmember Cole asked about the petition previously presented, and Councilmember Wagamon said the residents of Smith Hill had asked for speed tables that were engineered to stop signs. Councilmember Wagamon said the residents did not want the road widened, but simply a nice road, and, even more so, to feel connected to the City as a whole. He further said the project was not about traffic so much as community.

Councilmember Woodward asked that Mr. Kulhavy aid the Council in prioritization, especially on issues other than simply street condition.

d. City Manager's Report

1. Discussion of intent to pursue economic development grants.

The City Manager said the first two items of his report were informative, with a goal being to improve urban arterials in order to get more businesses to Huntsville.

2. Discussion of intent to pursue energy and green initiatives.

The City Manager said he would be hiring a consultant to pursue "green" grants and said he would probably ask for oversight from the Council.

3. Discussion of Shop Huntsville First campaign.

The City Manager and Kimm Thomas, Director of Tourism and Cultural Arts, displayed the logo for the Shop Huntsville First campaign, to encourage citizens to shop locally. They also showed the new Huntsville recycling logo.

4. Increase in state water fees.

The City Manager and Carol Reed, Public Utilities Director, explained the increase in fees for wastewater, drinking water, and water rights due to a decline in appropriations to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Ms. Reed said they had been made aware that there was an increase anticipated, but that the drinking water increase was much more than expected. She said the wastewater increase was more in line with expectations and that they would receive the water rights fee in January.

The Mayor confirmed that the drinking water fees were based on number of connections.

Councilmember Woodward asked if TCEQ could arbitrarily raise these fees. Ms. Reed confirmed that these fees could be adjusted by TCEQ without legislative input, and that they had not been increased in several years. Councilmember Forbus asked about an appeal process for the significant increase in the drinking water fee, but was told that it was unlikely as it was based on a rate multiplied by the number of connections.

Councilmember Ray responded to Ms. Reed's comment that TCEQ perhaps expected municipalities to pass along these increases to their citizens by asking if that would be necessary. Ms. Reed said that it was not automatic. The City Manager said the increases would have to be covered in the water budget.

Councilmember Wagamon asked if they would have the information needed when the budget process began again, and Ms. Reed said they did not expect annual increases.

Councilmember Barrett said it appeared to him that the TCEQ was receiving less money, and then assessing the citizens of Texas in order to make up the difference. Ms. Reed said her research indicated that the TCEQ had begun seeing the decline in appropriations in 2006 and that had eventually resulted in these increases. Councilmember Ray said it could be more accurately described as a non-deductable tax.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

Councilmember Ray reminded the citizens that the HOT Board would be meeting on December 8, 2009, and said that any recommendations for the Expo Center Feasibility Committee be directed to the Mayor and Council. HOT Board Chairman Councilman Forbus suggested contacting the City Secretary.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:46pm.